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HEALTH EDUCATION IN THE RURAL ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS FOR NEGROES IN BRAZOS COUNTY

By

Irene E. Randle

A Thesis in Education Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Bachelor of Science

in the

Division of Arts and Sciences

of the

Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College

Prairie View, Texas

August, 1935

DEDICATION

Dedicated

To my Mother, Grandmother and members of
my family whose incessant effort and earnest
confidence lent inspiration to the accomplish-
ing of this task.

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction.
- II. Purpose of Health Education in Fresno County.
- III. Specific Health Instruction and Dental Service.
- IV. Activities and Agencies for Promoting Health.
 - A. Health Programs.
 - B. Health Campaigns.
 - C. Co-operation

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the
following persons for their help
Mrs. Edna Abbot Shelton, County Nurse
Mrs. W. E. Neeley, County Superintendent
and other friends

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 - A. Health Programs.
 - B. Health Campaigns.
 - C. Co-operation of Organized Workers.
 - County Health Board.
 - Home Demonstration Agent.
 - Farm Demonstration Agent.
 - Jeanes Supervisor.
- V. Summary.
- VI. Bibliography.

INTRODUCTION

Health Education is receiving more attention today than many other subjects. Unless an individual is at a high standard of physical and mental efficiency, he cannot approach his work with a maximum of enthusiasm, skill, and energy. The acquisition of knowledge depends on a healthy mind and body.

In the matter of health, surveys have revealed the fact that country children may suffer. Fresh air and space are not enough. To insure healthful growth, knowledge of hygiene nutrition and disease prevention and protection are just as necessary in the country as in the city. Without a realization of the needs and possibilities of childhood and conscious planning to see that there are enough environmental influences to feed these needs, country life can be as harmful as life in a slum.

Common sense now forbids unnecessary waste of human life. The time, the thought, and money which have been devoted to the idea of conservation of forest national resources, wild life domestic animals, food et cetera, have stimulated us to a fuller appreciation of conservation in human life. This is indicated by the enactment of many civil and school laws dealing with health, and by the creation or the injection of new life into great numbers of privately and publicly supported health organizations.¹

¹ Brock, G. D. - Health Through Projects,
A. S. Barnes and Co., New York, 1932.

The development of each individual child's capabilities must be substituted for the accumulation of dry facts. Schools must shift from the old outworn classification of subject matter to the main trends in keeping with and motivating life today.

It is through education that the scientific knowledge of healthful living can function in the lives of individuals. It is also through education that adequate adaptation to social changes may be made. The interchange of ideas in daily intercourse and numerous formal and informal ways of learning are available for the spread of health knowledge, out of which health habits and attitudes may develop. A well conceived program of health education carried out through the institutions which society has created for the purpose of meeting its educational needs, the school, must be the chief concern of Brazos County teachers. Any school that neglects health has no true vision of its real function in society.

Health is definitely recognized as the most important issue of modern education. Persons who have attempted to formulate objectives for education have placed health first. The committee on secondary education named seven fundamental aims as follows: Health, mastery of fundamental processes, vocation, wise use of leisure time, ethical character and citizenship. All others have followed this list, in the main, varying perhaps the terminology.

Health education cannot be brought about incidentally.

There must be definite standards raised, specific habits formed and certain activities which foster health stressed. There is no conflict between hygiene and the most effective and rapid learning.

Learning cannot be lasting or profitable if physical and mental health are impaired.

An important factor in the efficiency of some modern schools is the large amount of attention given by the teachers toward making their instruction both mentally and physically hygienic. Teaching hygiene in an unhygienic classroom is as contradictory as teaching nature study or science entirely from a text book.¹

Health Education is here interpreted as giving to the individual pupil the needed information training and practice directly relating to maintaining the best possible health, physical mental and social for himself, and to fulfilling his health duty as a citizen. This is nothing more than giving the pupil his best chance to grow and develop physically, and to become an accepted individual in regard to health ideals in home and community.

The work in health education should in itself compose a section of life. Activities must be related very closely to the present life of each pupil, teaching him to think of his own health in a matter of fact way and as a means toward a

¹ Andress, James M., Health Education in Rural Schools
McMillan Co., Boston, Mass., 1930, Chapter IV, p. 84.

useful and happy life rather than as an end in itself.

It is the purpose of health education to have all phases of school life (the school environment, the school program, the routine of daily living) so planned according to health principles that each will contribute to the well being of the pupils. In this connection, the pupils through their health committees will share with the teachers the responsibility for environmental conditions and every phase conducive to health.

In setting up the health program its strength will lie in the fact that there is consistence co-ordination of theory and practice. The personal health service given to pupils and the conditions under which they live must exemplify the instruction given in the health education courses. There must be a continuous effort to unify all parts of the program so that there may be set up conditions favorable for effective living in the classroom and outside.

Pupils are not interested primarily in abstract conceptions of health. "Topical" recitations leave the majority of the group unresponsive. Provisions must be made for initiative and immediate action on the part of each pupil. The newer aims in health education emphasize the importance of building healthy personalities.

Each child as the day goes by need some new experience to develop and build his growing personality.

It is for the teacher who knows him to meet that growing need

by helping him to determine the wholesome act, the one which rounds out and fills him out.

The amount and kind of health teaching in Brazos County depend largely on the health consciousness of the principal and teachers. In some schools a great deal of constructive work along the line is being done. It is hoped that the health activities attempted will prove more satisfactory and significant. In each case the plan is to tie up health work with real life situations and form a unit which will include the school curriculum. Again, the purpose is to give the child an intelligent appreciation of the importance of good health and of co-operation with agencies in furthering community sanitary measures throughout Brazos County.

Investigations have brought to light many surprising conditions among Negroes in Brazos County. Many attitudes may be taken in the study of the health conditions of this kind. Scientific knowledge concerning health has only recently developed to the point where health situations are dealt with intelligently and without prejudice. The changed social conditions and modes of life growing out of necessities of modern civilization give us a check list for health. Practices and knowledge of thirty years or more may be responsible for rating as undesirable many health conditions in Brazos County. It is obvious then, that many bad habits growing out of social practices of a generation ago are inadequate and objectionable features in a health program.

Too many native tendencies express themselves without adequate redirection; hence, the necessity of direct teaching of health. Ignorance of the necessities of healthful living in a modern complex society make it necessary to give training in good citizenship by appreciating the ideals for community health.²

² Campbell, Mary - Rural Life at the Cross Roads,
MacMillan Company, New York, 1929, Chapter III, page 25.

Defective dental conditions are present in civilized man in higher ratio than any other form of physical impairment. It has been claimed that on the most searching and critical dental survey of the mouth, not more than ten per cent of people would show an absolutely clean bill of health. Even gross defects, such as infected gums, decayed teeth, pulpless teeth, teeth evidencing former decay and the possibility of present or future infection, are present in more than seventy per cent of supposedly healthy people subjected to a general physical examination.

There is no need to spend time in the consideration of evidence as to the degenerate conditions of the civilized mouth. It is a very definite fact and not an academic theory. This unlovely state of the average mouth might be deplored from the aesthetic standpoint alone, but in recent years a mass of evidence has been accumulated pointing toward these infected mouth conditions as not only the result of sub-standard physical states but the actual cause of many serious organic troubles.

There has been much debate as to the original cause of this low resistance to infection shown the civilized mouth. The first thought is failure properly to clean the mouth after eating and the accumulation of fermentative material on the surface of the teeth. In the present situation of mankind there is no doubt that this is an important cause of caries or tooth decay.

Pushing the inquiry further back, scientists are convinced that faults in the diet of the growing child, and still further

back, faults in the diet of the expectant mother are important factors in lowering the resistance of the mouth area.¹ Here the real work of the Brazos County Dental Staff begins.

Of our twenty-five million school children not over six or seven millions are free from dental disorder of some kind, and of the remainder of the population only a negligible minority.

About one fifth of all the teeth of school children are diseased. Every day these teeth are aching. Dental caries has been called the people's disease, no other is so widespread.

Diseased teeth are thought to be responsible for a vast amount of ill-health, including indigestion, anaemia, general debility, mental and physical retardation, nervousness and acute infectious diseases. Complications with heart and ear are common. Life expectancy and industrial efficiency depend in no small degree upon the fact that a tooth is worth more than a diamond.²

Defective teeth may affect the health of the entire body. The influence is chiefly of four kinds: decreased power of mastication due either to decay or irregularities of the teeth; the toxic effect of pus which is absorbed directly into the blood or taken into the stomach and intestines; reflex nervous disturbance due to pain, impaction of teeth; and the possibility of acting as a breeding-ground and distributing-point for

¹ Freeland, George E. - Modern Elementary School Practice, MacMillan Company, New York, 1926, Chapter VII, page 282.

² Journal of Education Research - Dec. 1926, page 336.

the bacteria which cause acute infectious disease.

Appropriate preventive treatment during childhood would probably insure good teeth to a majority of adults. Preventive measures should include especially cleanliness, thorough mastication, suitable food, the care of the temporary teeth, nutrition during infancy and childhood, the prevention of decay, the prevention of irregularity, and the repair of defects as rapidly as they appear. To this end the school of Brazos County make two contributions of the greatest importance. They instruct children more thoroughly in the essentials of mouth hygiene. They undertake preventive and curative treatment in school dental clinics, and develop proper food habits.

It requires little imagination to understand that if decayed teeth are responsible for the physical ills mentioned, they must also be responsible for defective scholarship. A body weakened by poor digestion and poisonous products does not make for a well-nourished brain and efficient mental activity. A good deal of evidence has been collected to show that children in poor health, troublesome to discipline, and backward in school have been restored to a normal, mental and physical condition through the correction of dental defects.¹

The general plan for the school dental service of Brazos County includes an increasing appreciation of, and responsibility for co-operation with those rendering professional ser-

¹ Suggested Program for the Training of Rural Teachers, page 101

vices essential to the health and protection of the individual and community. Lectures, exhibits and demonstrations by local dentists cover, specifically, all the fore-going points of dental hygiene.

Negro physicians, dentists and the two County Nurses visit the schools regularly and examine the pupils' teeth. About three times a year dental clinics are held in various communities that are accessible to the largest number of people. The pre-school and school children are looked after. All of the children's teeth are cleaned free.

The County nurses sell tooth brushes to school children and pre-school children for a very small sum of six cents. In many cases when the parents really are not able to buy the children brushes, the nurses will furnish each child with a brush gratis.

"The plan for school health instruction requires organization and utilization of those materials which will result in child learning in terms of present conduct, and in ability to recognize needs and adapt behavior intelligently to meet them. The social value of health education receives emphasis through community and social well-being as goals.¹

Many children of grades three, four and five are in the midst of the period of second dentition, and great care must be given to guard against malformation and maladjustments. For

¹ Payne, George E. and Schroeder, Louis C. - Health and Safety American Viewpoint Society, Chapter I, pages 11, 13.

this reason too, food should be well cooked and cut into small particles so that it may be easily masticated. Many troubles of digestion arise from improperly masticated food at this stage.

The instructional activities would include:

Teeth

What they are? - Position, classification,

Uses of the teeth.

Mastication of food

Speech

Appearance

Health

Care of the teeth

Brushing - How? When and how often?

Type of brush

Dental powder and paste, antiseptics.

Eating the right kind of food.

Effects of tobacco and candy.

Practices of biting pencils, fingernails and nuts.

Rhymes set to familiar tunes are interesting and useful.

(Tune: Billy Boy.)

Do you always brush your teeth,

Billy Boy, Billy Boy?

Do you always brush your teeth,

Charming Billy?

I answer right away

That I brush them twice a day,

For, oh, I would be both well and happy.

All during the year additional health songs, poems, plays and pageants are given by the pupils to build up appropriate

attitudes concerning health.¹

Education takes place in a community in various ways. The press, the platform, interchange of ideas in daily intercourse are available modes of health education.

The ministers, nurses, doctors, and special guests usually visit the community schools and deliver lectures that are intended to help the children develop strong healthy bodies. It is hoped that many native tendencies involving health habits will be adequately re-directed.

The United States Public Health Service is one of the major organizations fostering and promoting the National Negro Health Movement; a year round health program with emphasis upon the health problems of the Negro and needs for their solution.

This is the twenty-second anniversary of an idea of the late Booker T. Washington, Principal of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, the pilgrim who journeyed South and, first letting down his bucket where he was, later carried his message of head, heart, and hand education and interracial good will to all parts of the United States and to other parts of the world.

The field of service is great, for Brazos County has an

¹ Hygeia - May, 1935.

area of five hundred and ninety-seven square miles and a Negro population of nine thousand, one hundred and forty-eight.

A survey shows the scope of activities for improvement in health during a period of two years (1933-1935).

Public Health Nursing Service.

Hammond Memorial Hospital.

Extension Service.

Farm Agent.

Home Demonstration Agent.

Improved School Plants.

Additional Teachers.

Jeanes Supervisor.

Extension School of Teachers.

County Library.

C. W. A. Projects.

A. Health Survey.

B. Housing Survey.

C. Adult Night Schools.

American Red Cross.

Social Service.

Junior Red Cross.

Roll call.

Tuberculosis Christmas Seal Sale.

Fraternal Organizations.

Chamber of Commerce.

Publicity.

A. Press.

B. W. T. A. W. (Radio station)

The following is a report of Brazos County Health Board.

I. Individual Conferences: -

Pre-natal	27
Infant-pre-school	63
Midwives	293
Physicians	167
Individuals	1937
Total	<u>2487</u>

II. School Hygiene

Visits to schools	165
Children Inspected	1198
Number Defects	625
Number Corrections	157

Twenty children only of this number were found to be more than 13% underweight.

III. Home Visits

Pre-natal	46
Postnatal	22
Infant-Pre-school	41
School Students	187
Nursing Care	40
Instruction	151
Social Service	141
Institution with	
Patients	4
Total	<u>632</u>

Two Adult Health Clubs have been organized. Twenty-four completed the course prescribed by the State Bureau of Child Hygiene.

Clinics

3 Pre-school Attendance 26

5 Dental Attendance 232

The dentists offered their services during Health Week for twenty-five cents a tooth, or for cleaning or treating the gums, and in some cases, paid the cost with a chicken, vegetables, or eggs.

Testing and Immunization

Shick Test 42

Tuberculin Skin Test 268

A history is being written on each child showing a reaction. Follow-up will be an endeavor to locate cases and contacts.

Typhoid 1266 complete doses

Diphtheria 471 complete doses

Smallpox 191 complete doses

Every community has received immunity against at least one disease.

This was made possible by the free distribution of vaccine from the State Hygienic Laboratory and the county and city commissioners who furnished a physician. An interested school board paid the expense in one school district. Wherever it was possible, the Negroes paid their own fee, the max-

immun cost being:

Smallpox	25 cents
Typhoid	45 cents
Diphtheria	30 cents
Shick Test	— cents
Tuberculin Test	— cents

Literature on all health subjects has been distributed to schools and individuals. The Tuberculosis Primer is studied in the schools. The exhibit at the American Legion Fair was on Tuberculosis.

Demonstrations have been given on the care of the sick and the prevention of diseases to individual homes and families and to community groups.

Hot lunches are served daily in three of the thirty-six schools, five serve twice a week and eight have a supervised luncheon period. Handwashing before lunch is practiced in all the schools.

Printed materials supplement, correct and increase primary experiences and points of view which the child rather from contact with reality. Text books should be supplemented from current sources; newspapers, magazines, bulletins from research centers, material from federal, local and state agencies, Brazos County Board of Health, reports of state and federal extension services of the land grant college at Prairie View, Texas.

Chief among the many types of supplementary visual aids of learning are posters, wall charts, pictures, slides and films, or motion pictures.

A large amount of material comes from commercial enterprises. Many of the health charts and bulletins are obtained gratis. The children, however, appreciate more the charts or posters that they make themselves.

One of the most helpful campaigns conducted was the Handwashing Campaign. Everyday before the noon recess, each school child stepped in line to receive a little liquid soap to wash his hands. In schools where there were no fountains, the garden sprinkler was used very successfully. One child poured the water while the others washed their hands. Where no towels were available, the children simply slapped their hands together until they were dry.

The children were also taught that flies and mosquitoes are very dangerous and that they should be killed. Each teacher had in her school a Swat the Fly Campaign. Flies carry many diseases such as typhoid, cholera, diarrhea in infants, diphtheria, smallpox and parasitic worms. The children killed the flies at school and also at home.

The Chamber of Commerce of Bryan and Brazos Counties offered prizes to the school child who killed the most rats. The children were not to bring the dead rats but bring their tails to be counted. The number counted was surprising.

In sixteen schools the teachers supervised the lunch hour. Eight schools served hot lunches at least twice a week. The Parent-Teacher Association of each school furnished the food that the children eat.

The County Nurses, Jeanes Supervisor, County Farm Agent and County Home Agent have put their forces together and accomplished much in the Health Program of Brazos County especially in rural communities.

In the spring of 1935 many schools sponsored a Recreation Day. At this time the teachers were asked to bring as many boys and girls, men and women from their communities as possible to participate in the activities of the day. As a result there was a large attendance, about two hundred. Every community had some representatives. Rev. F. Rivers Barnwell, the State Supervisor of Health among the Negroes was present and taught quite a number of songs.

The County Farm and Home Agents go in the rural communities and teach the people the proper kinds of food and clothing that are needed in order to have good health.

The Jeanes Supervisor works with the teachers in the schools to instill the proper habits of health in the children under her supervision.¹

¹ Brazos County Health Report - 1934 - 1935.

SUMMARY

"The school is a responsible agency in the community for protecting and furthering child development. The health program for any particular school situation must be shaped with regard to the local conditions presented by special problems of community sanitation, housing, recreation and communicable diseases. Progress in development of a program will depend upon community support and the progressiveness of the personnel available.¹

From the avenues of protection of the school child while at school, together with the health service from agencies promoting physical well-being, the following outcomes for health education in Brazos County are listed for each child.

To practice personal health habits.

To know the manner in which common diseases are contracted and appreciate the value of co-operation in preventing their spread.

To recognize his responsibility for and have an interest in local health movements.

To understand the structure of the digestive muscular, blood, lymph, excretory and nervous systems and their work in relation to the hygiene of the body. (Advanced Group)

To know the structure and work of the eye and ear.

¹ Culter, Horace M. and Stone, Julia M. - Rural School and Its Methods and Management. Chapter VII, page 113. Silver Burdett and Company, New York, 1913

To be able to care for common emergencies.

To know the evil results of the use of drugs, tobacco and alcoholic liquors.

To have some regular habits of work and play well established.

To have ideals in mental and physical achievements.

The only instruction in habits of healthful living received by thousands of children is that which they receive in the school. The only health examination many of them ever have is provided by the school. The only remedial treatment for defects of eyes, teeth, and ears comes from the school. A good school performs this service. There is a tremendous economic gain, to say nothing of gains in human happiness, that is rendered by the health service of the school.¹

The teachers of Brazos County should know how well health education is functioning by the check list of questions:

Do few pupils repeat their grades?

Are there fewer cases of communicable diseases? (Colds included)

Do more of the pupils have voluntary medical examinations yearly? Also yearly dental examinations?

Is the standard of school achievement being raised?

Are more pupils being vaccinated or made immune to small-

¹ Freeland, George E., Morton, Roxana and Hall, Katherine H. - The Teaching in Intermediate Grades. Chapter VI, page 139. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927.

pox, diphtheria, scarlet fever et cetera?

Are fewer pupils outside the normal weight zone?

Are there fewer accidents due to carelessness?

Are certain activities becoming habitual practices by more of the pupils?

Are children coming to school each day with clean hands, face and clothing?

Does a larger per centage of the school pass the morning inspection favorably?

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